



Spring 2021

River Archives: A visual examination of self through personal journal entries along the Deschutes, Wenatchee, and Colorado rivers

Skylar Lynn Tibbetts
Western Washington University

Follow this and additional works at: https://cedar.wwu.edu/wwu_honors

 Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Tibbetts, Skylar Lynn, "River Archives: A visual examination of self through personal journal entries along the Deschutes, Wenatchee, and Colorado rivers" (2021). *WWU Honors Program Senior Projects*. 498.
https://cedar.wwu.edu/wwu_honors/498

This Project is brought to you for free and open access by the WWU Graduate and Undergraduate Scholarship at Western CEDAR. It has been accepted for inclusion in WWU Honors Program Senior Projects by an authorized administrator of Western CEDAR. For more information, please contact westerncedar@wwu.edu.

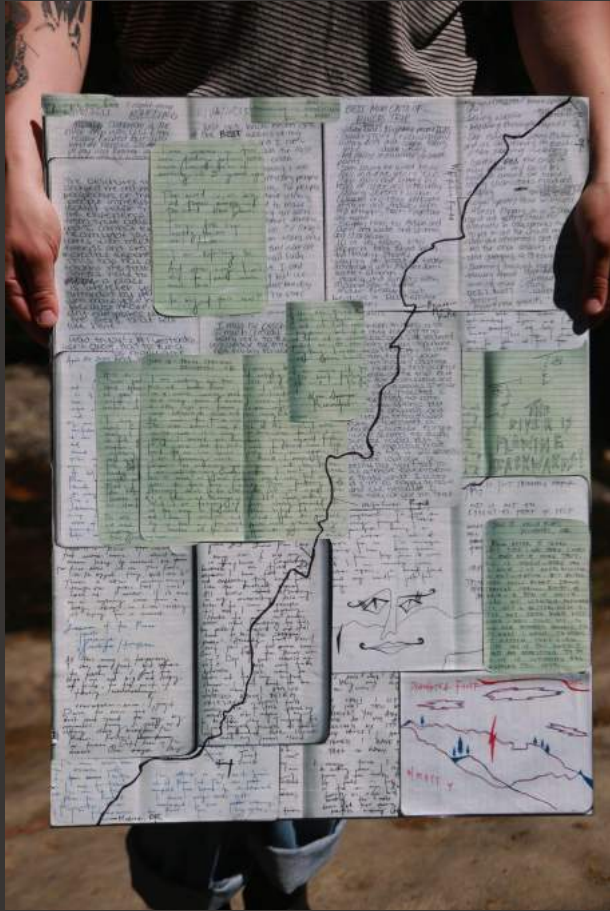
RIVER ARCHIVE



A VISUAL EXAMINATION OF SELF
THROUGH PERSONAL JOURNAL ALONG
THE DECHUTEY, WENATCHEE
+ COLORADO RIVERS

BY KYLAR
TIBBETT





JOURNAL

- ARCHIVE OF MY LIFE
- PROCESS OF TRANSCRIPTION
- PRIVATE VS. PUBLIC



RIVER4

JOURNEY TO
GUIDING



2015

2010

2020

2020



- LESSON 4 OF THE RIVER

Queerica - Where are you strong from?

→ Most you. Strongest source of self. Trust with potential power

Being at the same connects you to the place. All the power of the River. Every drop is all of it

Water [molds to you, engulfs you, lets you in, flows and flows and flows]

How to: Take the least amount of strokes possible - what am I holding on to that is unnecessary, holding me back? What can I let go of? Understanding the River, the flow of life, at the most empowering time, allows you to let go of that understood source of self with the flow

[RECIPROCITY]

Working against the River = Expending energy of people, structures, institutions that reduce our stamina

→ Importance of eddies: gather strength + look around, perceive, readjust

→ Running a line is not an individual act. Can't be on the River alone; gain knowledge of the River by hearing other perspectives

Are you working for the eddy by listening to it?

River is the Master of Taking the Path of Least Resistance

→ Hits a rock, goes around it, boils up, bursts and moves again, eddies at more upstream, recollect & reflect, ALWAYS CARRIES ON

Sense of Ease = To know your [in] the flow

Water [molds to you, engulfs you, lets you in, flows and flows and flows]

How to: Take the least amount of strokes possible → What am I holding on to that is unnecessary, holding me back? What can I let go of? Understanding the River, the flow of life, is the most empowering thing.

[RECIPROCITY]

Working against the River = Expending energy of people, structures, institutions that reduce our stamina

→ Importance of eddies, gather strength + look around, perceive, readjust

→ Running a line is not an individual act. Can't be on the River alone; gain knowledge of the River by hearing other perspectives

River is the Master of Taking the Path of Least Resistance

→ Hits a rock, goes around it, boils up, bursts and moves again, eddies and moves upstream, recollect & reflect, ALWAYS CARRIES ON

Sense of Ease = To know you're [in] the flow

INDIGENOUS
PERSPECTIVE

"THE PEYCHUTEY RIVER"



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

CORPORATE CHARTER
OF THE
CONFEDERATED TRIBES
OF THE
WARM SPRINGS RESERVATION
OF OREGON

RATIFIED APRIL 23, 1908



Illumination

BY ELIZABETH WOODZ

The irresistible and benevolent light brushes through the angel-wing begonias, the clippings of ruddy ears for the living room. Intimate moors, debris of grounded, forlorn walks, speckle through the vitreous quality of blush. As fluid hulls turn like trout backs, azure-tipped fins oscillate in the shallows, the clear floating is dizziness.

Tender events are meeting halves and wholes of affinity, the recurrence of whimsy and parallel streams flush away the blockage of malaise. Incandescent gratitude, pliable kindness smolders in the hulk of these sweet accumulations: abalone shells, the thoughtful carvings from friends, the stone of another's pocket, the photo of mystified moon over water, the smiles of worn chairs.

Austere hopes find pleasure in lately cherished flowers. The blooms are urticulate deluge, hues of delicacy. Petals parted dimly renderings, the viable imprint of the blood-hot beam of light with reformed courage. Berthing the finish to suppression, the blade of choice brings the flourish of dividing while adequately doubling worth by two. Multiplying. The luminescent burning of space. The heat is a domicile as abandoned as red roses budding their ascension from stem.

The sun has its own drum contenting itself with the rose heart it takes into continual rumbling. The connection of surface and hand. The great head of dark clouds finds its own place of unraveled repercussions and disjunction, elsewhere, over the tall, staunch mountains of indemnity.



The People, The Reservation

The people of the Warm Springs Reservation and their reservation have lived on the Warm Springs Reservation, in the great mountains of the Pacific Northwest, since the first of the great Indian wars. They have lived on the Warm Springs Reservation, in the great mountains of the Pacific Northwest, since the first of the great Indian wars. They have lived on the Warm Springs Reservation, in the great mountains of the Pacific Northwest, since the first of the great Indian wars.

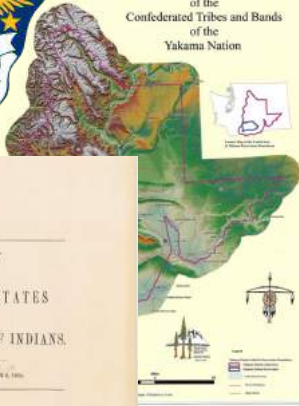


THE PEYCHUTEY RIVER
RIN4 ON THE LAND OF
THE CONFEDERATED TRIBES
OF WARM YPRIN44,
COMPRIED OF THE
WARM YPRIN44, WAYLO,
AND PAIVTE TRIBES

"THE WENATCHEE RIVER"



Ceded Area and Reservation Boundary
of the
Confederated Tribes and Bands
of the
Yakama Nation



TREATY
BETWEEN
THE UNITED STATES
AND THE
YAKAMA NATION OF INDIANS.

1855 A.D. SIGNED AT WASH. D.C.

THE HISTORY OF THE
WENATCHI FISHING RESERVATION

E. RICHARD HART

REPORT
OF THE COMMISSIONER OF
THE YAKIMA INDIAN
RESERVATION
WASHINGTON

A LETTER FROM THE
SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

A JOINT REPORT OF THE SURVEYING ENGINEERS
OF THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, DEPARTMENT
OF THE INTERIOR, AND THE SURVEYING ENGINEERS
OF THE INDIAN BUREAU, ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF
THE YAKIMA INDIAN RESERVATION

over 8. Jackson
port in August
one had
one collector.
1. children,
only
survivors
remain.
Narrow Tuleary
be boundary
and set to
August 17.
is arrived on
to survey and
the day
on August 18,
the boundary.



THE WENATCHEE RUNY ON THE
LAND OF THE CONFEDERATED
TRIBEY AND BANDY OF
THE YAKAMA NATION,
COMPRIED OF THE PALUY,
KLIKITAT, WAWAWALLA,
WENATCHI, WYHEAM,
AND YAKAMA PEOPLEY

"THE COLORADO RIVER"



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF THE HAVASUPAI TRIBE OF THE HAVASUPAI RESERVATION ARIZONA

112 IRVING NAKSI HAMILTON

Who or what inspires you?

"The natural world is my refuge. My father, mother, and grandmother were horticulturists but I never shared too much in beans from them. Still, I'm a gardener and like to make things grow. Words are metaphorically similar; we grow stories to entertain, inspire, and give comfort and hope.

What advice do you have for beginning writers?

Keeping a journal is an easy start. I would advise beginning writers to write, write, and write. Read abundantly from the masters of classical and modern writers. Read profusely of international works and in other languages. When in a writing lull, reading other people's work always inspires me. Live. Writers often write what they live; be open to new adventures, add to life's richness.

River

BY SHERWIN BITSUI

When we river,
blood fills cracks in buller shells,
oars become fingers scratching windows into dawn,
and faces are stirred from mounds of mica.

I notice the back isn't as smooth anymore,
the river crests at the moment of blinking;
its blood vessels stiffen and spear the drenched coat of flies
collecting outside the jaw.

Night slows here,
the first breath held back,
clenched like a tight fist in the arroyo under shattered glass.
But we still want to shake the oxygen loose from flypaper,
hack its veins,
divert its course,
and reveal its broken back,

the illusion of a broken back.



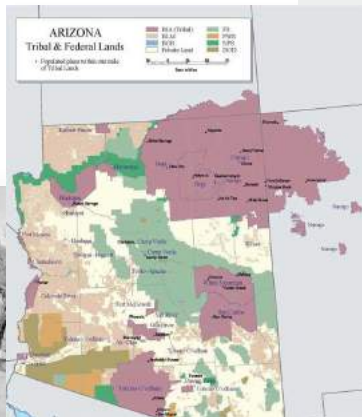
The Canyon Was Silent

Tonight as the bright moon fills the bed, I am certain I can't live
and face the desert. These houses of Chelly and the mountain arroyos are to drive
back to the sea. My family knows why I feel but the husband's gentle hands
must soothe when he sees. There is hope, there has been no way to measure
this loneliness and the great night now that stars called beauty.
Maybe, maybe I don't want. These days it makes me sad and jealous.

But some things really live by tonight. Yes, I am jealous
of how the children actually work for them. They wake, rise,
and pray each morning knowing they are blessed. For me, the beauty
they are distant most of the time. As dawn, I rush out and drive
to work instead of praying outside. They say we should travel.
These ancient things are our daily lives. Do you remember the horses?

Do you remember the horses? These horses
were each equally animals. We heard their people were jealous,
but we dismissed it. Then I felt how he loved and used to move
and stand and die. One was working in Canyon de Chelly. The mountain
was so bright, we could see the birds in the brush. The blue-red desert
and the white sand, and the people helped each other. That night the beauty
of the old nation, the nation, and the people were so great that the beauty
of the people of the nation was. One night a small herd of wild horses
came to our camp. They called and called the horses and then when they
were called of the night and were. The nation was so great. It was in the hands
of the people who love them. How much more substantial the nation
history were there. During these moments, it was easy to move.

But every night when I see the night, back then, I used to move
and pray, and pray. The people of the nation were so great that they
were taking from. Night, like that and his love laughter made my eyes
nearly as warm as the desert. One I know the colors of his horses
were a white horse. He moved me and his brother was so great
because I had not made him one. Other moments of his riding were there.



THE ARE 11 CURRENT
TRIBES CONNECTED TO
THE LAND + RECOVERED
WITHIN WHAT IS KNOWN
AS GRAND CANYON
NATIONAL PARK —
INCLUDING THE HOPI,
HAVA SUPAI, HUALAPAI,
PAIVTE BANDY, PINÉ,
PUEBLO OF ZUNI, +
THE YAVAPAI-APACHE
NATION

Tonight John gave an amazing land acknowledgment around the table of the burning coals. He said the indigenous peoples who have been here time immemorial think of the River as a relative or ancestor. What happens when we do what we have done to a relative? Dam it, confine it, control it, manipulate it to our own benefit... We have this and almost every river in a cage and we are feeding off of it. This place is made of people. This land is so much older than most anything else and it does not belong to me. How do I pay my respect to this place and its peoples? How do I do any of it justice?

Undated -

Tonight John gave an amazing land acknowledgment around the last of the burning coals. He said the indigenous peoples who have been here time immemorial think of the River as a relative or ancestor. What happens when we do what we have done to a relative? Dam it, confine it, control it, manipulate it to our own benefit... We have this and almost every river in a cage and we are feeding off of it. This place is made of people. This land is so much older than most anything else and it does not belong to me. How do I pay my respect to this place and its peoples? How do I do any of it justice?

December 24th 2020 -
Matkat Camp, River Mile 148

I wish I could've written all of today. But only now, in my sleeping bag, do I find the time. We stopped at two side canyons: Deer Creek, with a gorgeous waterfall and a hike along the ledge above a slot canyon, of which eventually opened up to sun and cottonwoods. Also, ancient handprints of the Diné whose sacred origin site it is. Creates an intense feeling of cognitive dissonance that I wish I had sufficient time to reflect upon. Is it even right to explore this place? How does our being there allow for both respect and disrespect? What can we learn? How do we acknowledge this history and put that acknowledgement to action? I've decided to take no pictures at these origin sites, but that is so small and still I feel like an intruder, a colonizer, here for my own benefit. These places, there is a magic to them that only comes from generations and generations of stories and spirits and son and prayer and understanding and symbiosis with nature: all of which we can never know.

December 24th 2020
Matkat Camp, River mile 148

I wish I could've written all of today. But only now, in my sleeping bag, do I find the time. We stopped at two side canyons: Deer Creek, with a gorgeous waterfall and a hike along the ledge above a slot canyon, of which eventually opened up to sun and cottonwoods. Also, ancient handprints of the Diné whose sacred origin site it is. Creates an intense feeling of cognitive dissonance that I wish I had sufficient time to reflect upon. Is it even right to explore this place? How does our being there allow for both respect and disrespect? What can we learn? How do we acknowledge this history and put that acknowledgement to action? I've decided to take no pictures at these origin sites, but that is so small and still I feel like an intruder, a colonizer, here for my own benefit. These places, there is a magic to them that only comes from generations and generations of stories and spirits and son and prayer and understanding and symbiosis with nature: all of which we can never know.

Full day. Kari & I went to a boat launch where we added to my family's privilege. We stopped at 2 side canyons: Deer Creek, with a gorgeous waterfall and a hike along the ledge above a slot canyon, of which eventually opened up to sun and cottonwoods. Also, ancient handprints of the Diné whose sacred origin site it is. Creates an intense feeling of cognitive dissonance that I wish I had sufficient time to reflect upon. Is it even right to explore this place? How does our being there allow for both respect and disrespect? What can we learn? How do we acknowledge this history and put that acknowledgement to action? I've decided to take no pictures at these origin sites, but that is so small and still I feel like an intruder, a colonizer, here for my own benefit. These places, there is a magic to them that only comes from generations and generations of stories and spirits and son and prayer and understanding and symbiosis with nature: all of which we can never know.

Kari & I discovered this a bit later than the others, along with a bunch of other things. I had really clear a view, and found an old stone arrowhead. I have a lot of power behind me. I pushed some of the things off to the group.

Kari & I discovered this a bit later than the others, along with a bunch of other things. I had really clear a view, and found an old stone arrowhead. I have a lot of power behind me. I pushed some of the things off to the group.



READING



THE CANYON

December 16 2021 !!



~2 PM

I'm sitting up on the rocks above camp and the sun keeps coming in & out. I'm wearing more than a few layers, including my yellow fleece & Louise's old blue flannel. Today we took a river bath, all the gals and I. We jumped off a rock before lathering ourselves up with soap and giving our hair a good scratch + condition and jumping in again, squealing at the cold water, all clutching our naked bodies. Peeking in the River, climbing nude up the rocks, one after each other. Combing our hair, feeling our soft, clean skin. I felt very comfortable, even naked around so many people. We just know each other like this. Canyon women, diving, shivering, laughing, climbing, puckering, eating, loving.

December 16th 2021 -

~2 PM

I'm sitting up on the rocks above camp and the sun keeps coming in & out. I'm wearing more than a few layers, including my yellow fleece & Louise's old blue flannel. Today we took a river bath, all the gals and I. We jumped off a rock before lathering ourselves up with soap and giving our hair a good scratch + condition and jumping in again, squealing at the cold water, all clutching our naked bodies. Peeking in the River, climbing nude up the rocks, one after each other. Combing our hair, feeling our soft, clean skin. I felt very comfortable, even naked around so many people. We just know each other like this. Canyon women, diving, shivering, laughing, climbing, puckering, eating, loving.

How bonding, this place, this experience is. I think the desert just connects you so deeply, to the land, to Earth's resilience. I'm thinking about Utah - being there this summer. Change feels necessary, not quite overdone but getting there. Scenery is inherent to experience. Landscape is place. The desert, all its flora and fauna, its water, its sun, its storms, its skies: the vastness of everything. How big and Long it is. Yes, I feel so connected to the PNW: the big trees and sharp rivers, the dark and eerie Earth. But something here is calling me, and with gusto. Yesterday I mentioned to Karey on the boat how hard it is to feel like myself. She said yes, her too, like she molds to other peoples perceptions of her. For me it's like: I'm either me or I'm not me. Do I only associate my sense of self with receiving validation and attention from others? Am I not me when I am not special? The sun is especially warm now, on my cheek and legs. I dread the moment it escapes behind the cliff, but there is always tomorrow. 3 more days on the River. How to savor every minute, How to reconcile that. You cannot separate my sense of self and the River. I wonder, when was the first time I saw a river: a fast-moving body of water, carried by current. I wonder if I stopped to stare, if I was scared, or amazed, or dazed. My inner child, my past selves, are so much apart of me. They live here with me forever. They float down the River beside me, they crash through the waves as I hold the oars and keep the boat straight. I am just this huge conglomerate of selves! This may be why it's so hard to ever feel true to any one 'self'. I am myself even when I feel like I am not. Perhaps it's coming to terms with this fact, staring it dead in the eye and dousing it in understanding, that brings us closer to ourselves.

To sit out to Emily is
to sit out to strength & power,
empowers me to be near her

I feel so warm tonight -

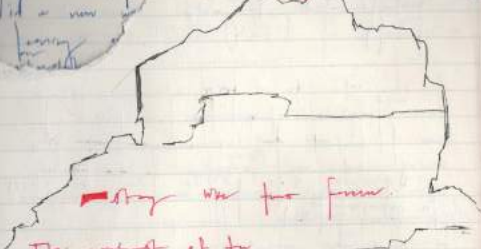
"Your own aliveness is measured by the
aliveness of your relationships with
others"

Thoroughness / Intuition
Push out for Noise

December 31 - The sun glows just that
top of the butte is orange; the
rest just faded brown. She does
this to the River too, turns it to a green. I find a spot to sit
alone and I would've thought I'd be interrupted already but it seems everyone
else got caught up. I've never been somewhere where the silence is so loud!
Today H was rowing and I thought I could stay like this forever.

today
I'm in midwest
is a new
leaving
the world

Amphiprison Canyon - Miles 290



Stay was for four

The contrast of the
Red rock and Blue
sky. The silence is so
loud, resounding. It almost rings
in my ears. How is it possible
that the loudest thing is the
absence of sound itself? I am
at the edge of all of it: sound,
self, belief, truth, water. It's
the last day of the year and
I will never see this place
again.

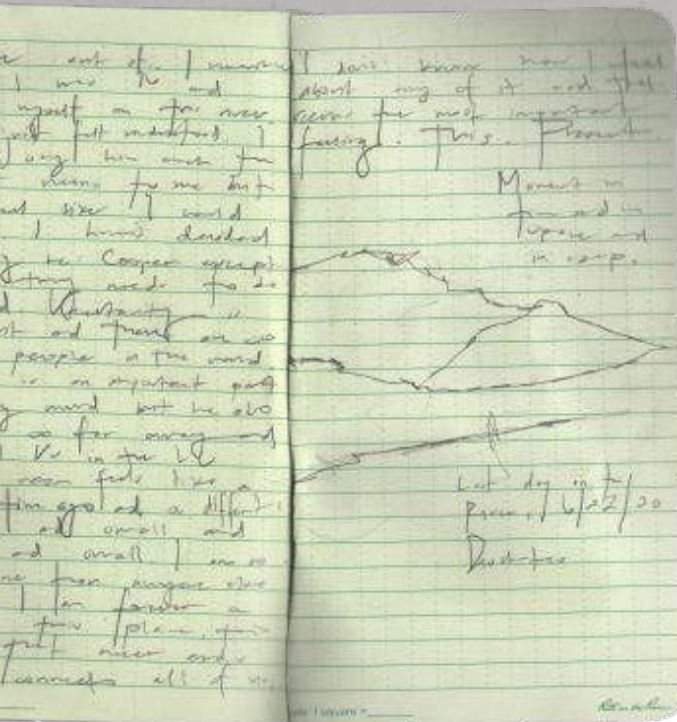
Laughter comes around the corner like
this always. Suddenly,

December 31st 2020 -

The sun glows just so that only top of the butte is orange; the rest this faded brown. She does this to the River too, turns it to a green. I find a spot to sit alone and I would've thought I'd be interrupted already but it seems everyone else got caught up. I've never been somewhere where the silence is so loud! Today H was rowing and I thought I could stay like this forever.

The contrast of Red rock and Blue sky. The silence is so loud, resounding. It almost rings in my ears. How is it possible that the loudest thing is the absence of sound itself? I am at the edge of all of it: sound, self, belief, truth, water. It's the last day of the year and I will never see this place again.

Laughter comes around the corner like this always: Suddenly,



June 21st 2020 -

Last night on the River. Guided down a class III today and "aced it". Not feeling as scared of the River, more like I can understand it and manipulate it. I am feeling at home in this dry, barren place. I want to go home but I want to take all these lessons and the person I built of myself here. There's not really any words to describe how this week has changed me. I remember when I was 16 and built myself on this river, and just felt understood. I can't say how much the River means to me, but I feel like I could cry. I haven't decided anything except that nothing needs to be decided. Uncertainty is inherent and there are so many people in the world. He is an important part of my world but he also seems so far away and so small. Us in the living room feels like a long time ago and a different Universe and small and small and small. I am so much more than anyone else because I am forever a part of this place, this River that never ends but connects all of us. I don't know how I feel about any of it and that seems the most important feeling. This. Present. Moment in time and space and in camp.

BEST MOMENTS OF
RIVER TRIP

- water ^{falls and} ~~hijacking~~ people from ^{boats}
- Guiding raft (+ accidentally hitting raft and Logan falling in) - deer calves
- me falling in + water in sweat pants
- Sam saying he would never fall in the river, yelling YOLO, then falling and hitting his head on cooler and octopus
- Staring at Sam + Logan (slept) and taking pictures of them and Aiden, Sam and strapping them together at night
- sleeping next to Aiden and Sam and Katie and Shannon and stargazing
- 10 of us fitting into sleeping bag lined boat and feeling stones
- Laying on boat on water stargazing with Aiden + Sam + Katie + Shannon
- Hiking and sunsets with Aiden, Sam + Katie
- Aiden breaking out because of 'Panthessence' in bushes

2020

2015

There is a River that makes sense. I almost killed someone today by accident but the River didn't let me. This feels like the biggest thing. And isn't it? There's a little creature running through the grass that I can't see and I wonder if it sees me as anything more than a body. Okay, so I am sitting just hoping for a moment.

Lessons of the River:

- I can see that but refuse to feel it. I feel so high up and big and lucky at times, to the point of being overwhelming.
- I can see that but refuse to feel it. I feel so high up and big and lucky at times, to the point of being overwhelming.

All this worry is temporary: I can see that but refuse to feel it. I feel so high up and big and lucky at times, to the point of being overwhelming.

overwhelm-ance. I want Dawn to miss me!! I don't even need to say big romantic thing: just me sitting close beside the River. Knees on knees. Out here in the desert. She says: "My

Undated -

I see you dip your toes in the River and grimace as if you just got bit. It is biting, I say, but only to myself. Only to myself I say, Don't make the mistake again of thinking a bite is a bad thing. Sometimes it's a warning. Sometimes it is a: I am here to teach you lessons and I am here to see you, so you can go home and walk across the dark street in the dead of winter and feel warmth everywhere.

There is a River somewhere that makes sense. I almost killed someone today by accident but the River didn't let me. This feels like the biggest thing. And isn't it? There's a little creature running through the grass that I can't see and I wonder if it sees me as anything more than a body. Okay, so I am sitting just hoping for a moment.

All this worry is temporary: I can see that I refuse to feel it. I feel so high up and big and lucky at times, to the point of it being overwhelming.

Overwhelm-ance. I want Dawn to miss me! I don't even need any big romantic thing: just us sitting close beside the River. Knees on knees, Out here in the desert. She says: "Why is sitting out here so different from sitting in camp when it's the same thing?" And I know exactly what she means! And she buys a new flavor of licorice each week. Watermelon last week, blue raspberry today. I eat it up until I am sick with the moment.

time feel a strong urge to
let it go and everything.
And so many mixed feelings
that trip has been so good
and so good but I am
also looking forward to it being
over and getting into a
living of things. I haven't
wanted to shed much from
trip but am falling back
in low with journaling.
a great work a dog -
a direct pup to and the
river and over flow. It seems
to feel as if it is out-
growing Owen. How do we
cultivate attention and
attention in our relationships?
The River is Life and
Flow and Meaning
and Relationships and Man-
ment and Sustenance and
Knowledge and Learning and
Giving and Learning and
Coming and Being and
Proving and Disappointing and
Big and Powerful and Deceiving
and Manifesting and All-Knowing
and All-Knowing. She knows
all my secrets and she loves me
and pushes me. She cares so
deeply. So wide.

September 5th 2020 -

The River is Life and Love and Flow and Meaning and Relationships
and Movement and Sustenance and Knowledge and Learning and
Giving and Learning and Coming and Being and Proving and
Disappointing and Big and Powerful and Deceiving and Cultivating
and Manifesting and All-Knowing. The River is all-knowing. She
knows all my secrets and she loves me and she pushes me. She cares so
deeply. So wide.

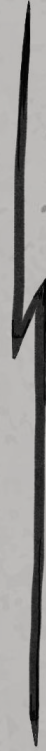


Thank you to Matt Marinez and Cierra Coppock – for their art expertise and all the late-night ice cream – and again to Matt for the photos, prompting questions, and lattes.

Thanks to Kate Stevenson for all the printing help – it means more than you know.

BIG shoutout to my best friends – Hailey, Dagny, Bree, Franny, and Serafima – for the constant support, laughter, and yummy dinners!

Thank you to my river mentors Emily Ford, Katie King, and Amanda Close for sharing with me their love & respect of the river, and all the ways it heals and bonds.



Thank you to my river sisters Dawn – for the many flips & licorice flavors, and for showing me how much fun life can be – and Karey – for your courage, and for running House Rock that first big day – and of course Hailey, again and again.

Hugs & kisses to the whole Canyon crew!
<3

And a final thank you to my family for encouraging me to live out my dreams (without prescriptive expectations). All the love.